

TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS.

BY RUDYARD KIPLING.

Will you conquer my heart with your beauty,
my soul going out from afar?
Shall I fall to your hand as a victim of crafty and
cautious shikar?

Have I met you and passed you already, un-
knowing, unthinking, and blind?
Shall I meet you next session at Simla, O sweet-
est and best of your kind?

Does the P. and O. bear you to me ward, or, clad
in short frocks in the West,
Are you growing the charms that shall capture
and torture the heart in my breast?

Will you stay in the Plains till September—my
passion as warm as the day?
Will you bring me to book on the mountains, or
where the thermantidotes play?

When the light of your eyes shall make pallid
the mean lesser lights I pursue,
And the charm of your presence shall lure me
from love of the gay "thirteen two."

When the peg and the pigskin shall please not;
when I buy me Calcutta built clothes;
When I quit the Delight of Wild Assees; fore-
swearing the swearing of oaths;

As a deer to the hand of the hunter when I
turned 'mid the gibes of my friends;
When the days of my freedom are numbered,
and the life of the bachelor ends.

Ah, goddess! child, spinster, or widow—as of old
on Mars Hill when they raised
To the gods that they knew not an altar—so I, a
young pagan, have praised

The goddess I know not nor worship; yet if half
that men tell me be true
You will come in the future, and therefore these
verses are written to you.

A Matchmaker's Stratagem.

From London Truth.

In the opinion of matchmaking mothers Jack Fairservice was a very objectionable person. Strange to say, this was not because he was ill-looking or ill-bred, but for exactly the opposite reason. Good looks and good manners do not, as a rule, make a man unpopular with ladies of any age or condition; but, by a peculiar irony of fate, in Jack's case they did. If he had been unattractive, mothers with marriageable daughters would only have ignored him; but, being attractive, they absolutely detested him.

The ground of their dislike lay in this: Jack Fairservice was a detrimental. He had all the qualifications for winning their daughters, and none of the qualifications for marrying them. Girls were constantly spoiling their chances with other men by falling desperately in love with him, while he had no money to set up house, no energy to make money, and no desire to try. He was quite content to live on his £150 a year, to go about in the society in which his connections placed him, and to let life slip past without effort or anxiety. It could not be said that he encouraged girls to see their heads over him. He paid particular attention to no one, but he was extremely agreeable to all, and his good looks and pleasant manners, without design on his part, frequently made him conquests that he did not want.

Jack was a jovial, easy-going young fellow, and he laughed alike at the anger of the mothers and the devotion of the daughters, not because he was heartless, but because he only saw the folly of both. If a girl injured her prospects by her behavior toward him he regretted it; but, as he had never provoked the passion, he felt no responsibility for it. And in the ordinary case, where no harm was done, the madness of the daughter and the rage of the mother appeared to him equally silly and equally amusing.

One of the matrons who most cordially detested him was his own aunt, Mrs. Hatch. The Rev. Mr. Hatch, Jack's uncle by his mother's side, was vicar of a fashionable West End church and the possessor—chiefly through his wife—of a considerable fortune. He himself was not unlike Jack—jovial, easy-going, and good-natured, but resolute enough when his feelings or his conscience were aroused. His wife, who when he married her was a wealthy widow, was very different. She was restless, bitter, and ambitious. Moving in the best society and mixing every day with people of wealth and title, she was anxious to utilize her opportunities to get her daughters well married, and anything or any person that seemed to stand in the way of this consummation she regarded with unspeakable hatred and disgust.

Mrs. Hatch in this husband hunt was not actuated by regard for her daughters' interests—she desired to see the poor girls well married, simply in order that she might thus be enabled to leave everything she possessed to her son, Nathaniel Sheepy. The gentleman in question was her only child by her first husband, and she cherished him with an infinite devotion. For his sake she would have sacrificed herself, and she was determined to sacrifice her daughters, though, Heaven knows, a more pitiful idol than Nathaniel human folly never worshipped.

Mrs. Hatch had not been very successful in her design for disposing of her superfluous daughters, and her failure she attributed to two causes. Of course Jack was the first. She thought that his frequent visits to her house frightened off many less attractive but wealthier men, and she hated him for that. The other cause was Lily Ruth. Lily Ruth was an orphan niece of Mr. Hatch's, who lived with him half as a relative and half as a governess to the younger girls. She was absolutely penniless, but then she was remarkably pretty, and Mrs. Hatch thought that her beauty by contrast made the plain Misses Hatch look more plain, and she hated her on this account. Jack Fairservice was independent of her, and he could laugh at her ill-concealed aversion to him. But, unfortunately, poor Lily Ruth was a dependent, and on her the angry woman poured out the vials of her wrath.

Jack Fairservice being a kindly, good-natured fellow, the cruelty with which he frequently saw Mrs. Hatch treat his poor little cousin used to rouse his bitter indignation.

The Vicar also was indignant at his wife's treatment of the girl, and did everything in his power to protect her. She was a constant source of squabbles between Mr. and Mrs. Hatch. The former was always striving to have her treated as a daughter, the latter to degrade her to the level of a servant, and though in some ways the Vicar carried his points in

others his patronage only added to Lily's misery.

For a long time Jack and his uncle were agreed in all their views with regard to Lily and Mrs. Hatch's treatment of her, but of late a slight divergency had sprung up between them. It arose in this way: Richard Windham, a young curate of good family, had recently manifested a deep interest in Lily. Mr. Windham had at first been an admirer of the eldest Miss Hatch, (Louisa,) but soon the sweeter disposition of Lily Ruth had weaned his affections. Mrs. Hatch was furious at this, as she was anxious to have Mr. Windham for a son-in-law. Strange to say, Mr. Hatch took sides with her in this matter. He discouraged in every way Mr. Windham's attentions to Lily and tried to drive them toward his daughter. Jack was astonished at this behavior, and remonstrated. Mr. Hatch explained that though Mr. Windham had excellent prospects he was at present very poor. If he married Lily he and she for an indefinite time would have just £120 a year to live upon. If, however, he married Louie, Mrs. Hatch would get him presented to a living which her cousin, Lord Blackcock, had promised her for Nathaniel Sheepy, and so the young couple would be comfortable till Mr. Windham's prospects were realized. Jack contended that Lily would be happier with Mr. Windham on £120 a year than she was at present, but the Vicar would not hear of so improvident a marriage. "Get him a decent living," he said, "and I'll be delighted to see Lily and him married, but I can't consent to her settling down with nothing but beggary before her." And Jack wondered and wondered if, after all, it was not possible to get Mr. Windham a living.

During each winter the Hatches gave several small dances. These usually were preceded and followed by a row between Mr. and Mrs. Hatch. The Vicar always insisted that his nephew should be asked, and that his niece should be dressed as well and treated in the same way as his daughters. In the end he always had his way, but he never had it without a bitter struggle. Then, after the dance, the next morning's breakfast table was sure to be the scene of another struggle. Mrs. Hatch began by denouncing Jack and Lily, Mr. Hatch responded with a strong defense, Mrs. Hatch continued the attack vigorously, and the struggle went on with varying fortune till it was brought to a close by an armed truce about luncheon time.

One morning in January a domestic battle of this kind was fought.

"I wish to goodness," Mrs. Hatch began, "that Jack Fairservice would show his face here no more."

"Why?" demanded Mr. Hatch. "What harm has he done?"

"Why, lots of harm," the lady answered, angrily; "he has become a thorough nuisance. I was perfectly sick last night watching him gadding about and smiling at every girl in the room. As long as he's here none of our girls have much chance of getting settled."

"Why, last night he spent nearly all the evening talking to Lily," said Mr. Hatch, speaking with perfect truth. "Is there anything objectionable in that?"

"No, I'm sure there isn't," answered Mrs. Hatch. "I only wish he would marry her and take her out of this. I'm sick of the pair! I wonder if anybody else has so many beggarly relatives as we?"

"Mrs. Hatch, how dare you refer to my nephew and niece as beggarly relatives?" the Vicar demanded, passionately.

"And are they not beggars?" screamed the lady, shrilly. "Is Jack Fairservice anything better than a beggar, with his miserable—"

"Mr. Fairservice, ma'am," said a servant, opening the door.

"Oh! he's here early this morning," said Mrs. Hatch, coolly enough, though, in spite of herself, she felt rather awkward.

As she spoke Jack came running, in an excited way, into the room.

"Really, Jack," cried Mrs. Hatch, rising in indignation from her seat. "Really, Jack, if you don't know how to come into a room like a gentleman, you'd better not come here at all."

"Oh, forgive me, aunt," answered Jack, hurriedly. "I'm so excited. Haven't you heard the news? It has got into all the papers. Yes, here it is." And Jack, taking up the *Morning Post*, which lay on the breakfast table, read as follows: "We learn that Mr. Henry Fairservice, who lately died in Australia, has left all his property, amounting to over £100,000, to his cousin, Mr. John Fairservice. The latter is a nephew of the Rev. Mr. Hatch, vicar of St. Boniface."

"This morning," Jack went on, "I received a letter from the solicitors, asking me to call on them as soon as possible to take the necessary steps for realizing the estate."

"Eh?" gasped out Mrs. Hatch, as she sank back in amazement in her chair.

"You don't mean it, Jack?" exclaimed Mr. Hatch, in a voice trembling with excitement and pleasure.

"I do, really, uncle," answered Jack. "Just read this, and you'll see for yourself."

The Vicar hastily fixed on his spectacles and read the announcement.

"Well, Jack, my boy," cried Mr. Hatch, when he had finished reading, "give me your hand. I congratulate you with all my heart. Much happiness may it bring you, my lad."

"Over a hundred thousand pounds!" said Mrs. Hatch, in a dazed way.

"Yes, aunt, that's the solicitors' estimate, and they say it's likelier to turn out more rather than less."

"That's about five thousand a year, isn't it?" she inquired.

"Yes, about that," replied Jack, smiling.

Mrs. Hatch took a long breath and reflected.

"He can't be called a beggar any longer, eh, Maria?" said the Vicar, maliciously.

"Really, Mr. Hatch, I'm astonished at you," answered his wife, indignantly. (She had now recovered her self-possession.) "Well, Jack, my dear, I congratulate you, and hope you'll use your great good fortune with forethought and prudence, and wisdom and grace."

"Thank you, aunt," replied Jack, laughing a little. "Well, I must be off. The solicitors want to see me again as soon as possible."

"You'll call, Jack dear, on your way back, won't you?" cried Mrs. Hatch.

"Yes, aunt, just for a moment, to tell you if there's anything new," responded Jack, and away he went.

He was not well gone before Mrs. Hatch was out of the breakfast-room and up to the boudoir,

where her elder daughters were.

"Was that Jack, mamma?" asked the eldest, Louisa.

"Yes, Louie, and he's to be back this afternoon, so you must be particular about your dress. Try and look well for once."

"What!" cried Fanny, the youngest, "dress for Jack? What do you mean, mamma?"

"Mean!" exclaimed Mrs. Hatch, "I mean that he's inherited a hundred thousand pounds, and if one of you girls don't share it, you're a pack of fools."

From this day forth Mrs. Hatch's bearing and feelings toward Jack Fairservice changed altogether. She invented all manner of devices for attracting him to the house, and when she had him there she exerted all her powers of entrapping him. Her efforts were not altogether in vain, but her success was of such a character as to be almost as exasperating as complete failure.

The fact was that Jack manifested exactly the same tastes and tendencies as the Rev. Mr. Windham. Among the Misses Hatch Mr. Windham's favorite was the eldest, Miss Louie, and to Mrs. Hatch's intense annoyance she proved Jack's favorite, too. That was bad enough, but there was worse behind. Mr. Windham had evinced a preference for little Lily Ruth even over Miss Louie Hatch, and so now did Jack. Though obviously very fond of Louie, he appeared still more fond of little Lily.

This was both an awkward and irritating state of affairs. Mrs. Hatch wanted both the men for sons-in-law, and both appeared willing to become so, but instead of choosing like sensible beings separate daughters they chose the same one. Of course, Miss Louie could not marry them both, yet the only alternative to that seemed to be that Lily Ruth should marry the other. This was gall and wormwood to Mrs. Hatch.

Here another very serious consideration came in. Assuming that Jack and Mr. Windham were to be married to Miss Louie and Lily Ruth, which was to marry which? Mr. Windham was a fairly good match, but Jack was a much better one. If Mrs. Hatch could be sure of securing Jack for her daughter that would be some consolation for Lily having Mr. Windham, but was she? Everything pointed the other way. Lily was the first favorite of both men, and therefore she would have the first choice. Mrs. Hatch had little doubt that she preferred the curate to her cousin, but then there were impediments in the way of her marriage to the curate, while there were none as regarded her union with Jack. It therefore became clear to her that if she did not do something to prevent it before long Lily would be asked to become Mrs. Jack Fairservice.

The only thing Mrs. Hatch could do under the circumstances was to dispose of Lily, and the only way in which she could dispose of Lily was by marrying her to Mr. Windham. Now, before Mr. Hatch would consent to such a marriage Mr. Windham must be provided with a living, and the only way Mr. Windham could be provided with a living was by Mrs. Hatch getting Lord Blackcock to give him the one which he had promised to Nathaniel Sheepy. After an agonizing struggle Mrs. Hatch resolved to ask Lord Blackcock to present Mr. Windham, on condition that that gentleman proposed to Lily without delay, that Lily accepted him, and that Mr. Hatch approved of their union.

All parties proved amenable. Lily and Mr. Windham jumped at a proposal which permitted them to fulfill their brightest dreams. Lord Blackcock knew nothing of the arrangement, but when Mrs. Hatch wrote to him he replied that a living happening just then to be vacant he had sent Mr. Windham's name to the Bishop.

Mrs. Hatch had thought it expedient to keep Jack in the dark until everything was settled. She feared that if he knew what was going on sooner he might make an attempt to win Lily from the curate before it was too late, and accordingly the first intimation Jack received of his cousin's engagement was when Mrs. Hatch informed him that she was to be married in a month, and asked him, as her nearest kinsman after Mr. Hatch, who was to marry her, to give her away. Jack at first was a little startled and incredulous, but when he realized how things stood he congratulated little Lily with a heartiness which caused his aunt to wonder whether he was, after all, in love with Lily.

In due course the happy day arrived and the happy couple were duly married. Jack was the life and soul of everything from the moment he arrived in the morning to take the bride to church till late in the afternoon, when little Lily, with a joyful heart, left forever her old but unhappy home. Then Jack's spirits fell and he became dull and gloomy.

Mrs. Hatch had been watching him closely, and she saw the change and guessed its reason. Yes, Jack must be thinking of proposing. Mrs. Hatch was a keen observer, and she knew that young men get very gloomy, as a rule, at such times—at any rate, both her husbands had done so. She attributed it to nervousness, and so she resolved to assist Jack by addressing to him a few encouraging remarks.

Getting him between herself and Mr. Hatch, she began:

"You seem dull, Jack; I hope you're not jealous of Mr. Windham?" And she smiled gently on Jack.

"Well, aunt," answered Jack a trifle sadly, "the truth is, I am."

Mrs. Hatch gave a start. So, after all, Jack was in love with Lily. What a mercy it was she was married off and gone!

"Don't you think, Jack," asked Mrs. Hatch gently, "that you could get some other pretty girl to make up for her loss?"

"You misunderstand me, aunt," explained Jack. "I'm jealous of Windham, not because I'm fond of Lily, but because I'm fond of some one else."

"I'm afraid, Jack, I don't comprehend you," said Mrs. Hatch in a puzzled tone.

"It's this way, aunt; I'm jealous of Windham because he's in a position to marry and I'm not."

"Why not?" inquired Mrs. Hatch, considerably startled.

"Not rich enough," replied Jack laconically. "Don't joke now, Jack," remonstrated Mrs. Hatch. "What about the hundred thousand pounds your cousin left you?"

"Oh, I thought you had heard about that," said Jack, while the ghost of a smile flickered round his mouth. "The newspaper announced my great good fortune, and you see, my cousin was married and had eleven children when he died, and though the hundred thousand was left to me all right it was only left to me as their trustee."

A gentle ripple of laughter from the other side of Jack informed Mrs. Hatch that if she had not heard of this before her husband had.

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